

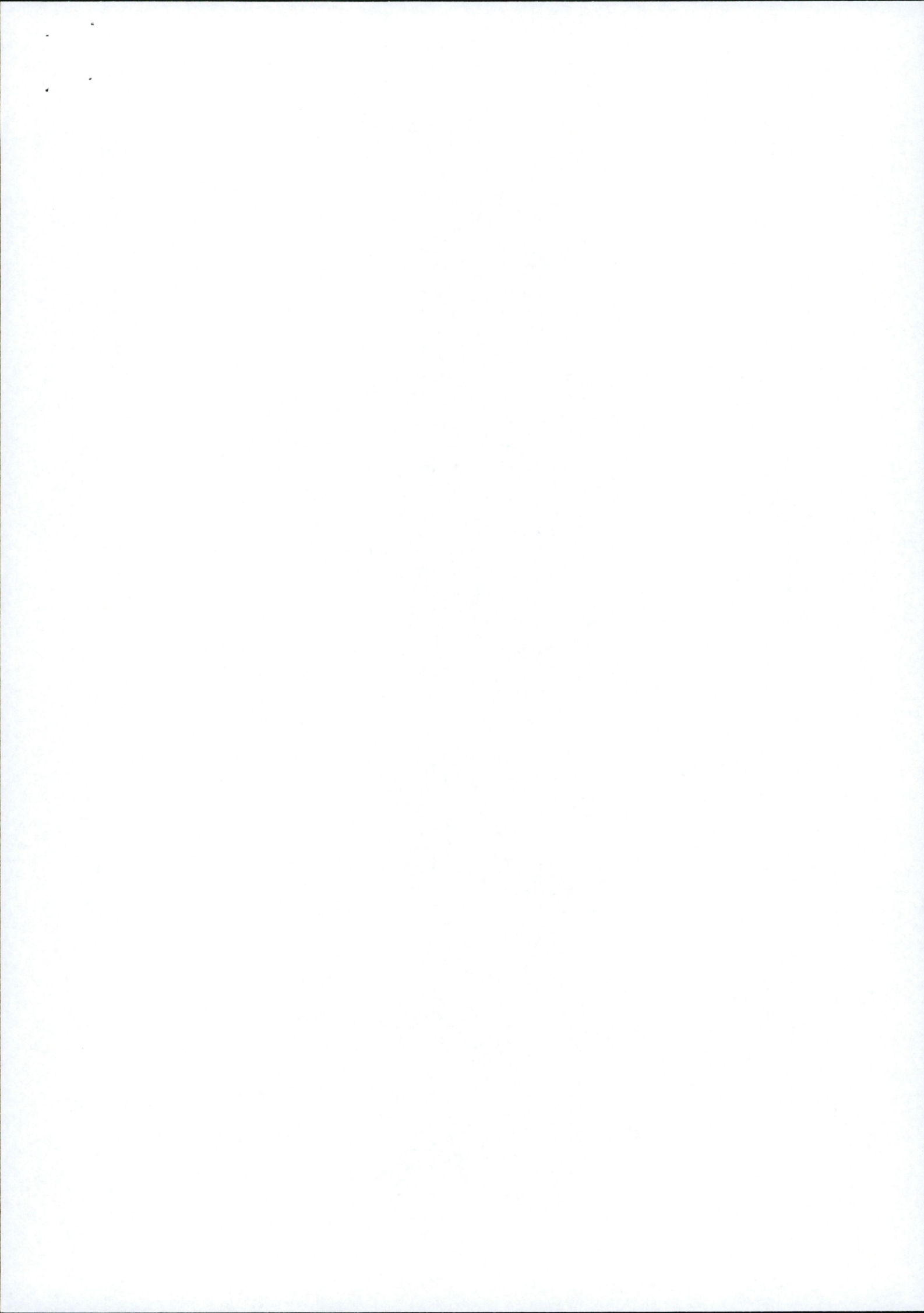
**Proposed development at Crockaunadreenagh road, Redgap,
Rathcoole, Co. Dublin**

**for
Pearse McKiernan**

Landscape and Visual Assessment

Landmark 
Design & Consultancy Ltd

Landscape Design & Consultancy
Ballinafagh, Prosperous, Naas, Co. Kildare.
M: 086 851 9296
E: info@landmarkdesigns.ie



1.0 Landscape and Visual Assessment

1.1 Introduction

This report addresses the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development on lands at Redgap, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin. The emphasis is on the likely significant effects of the proposal. It outlines the methodology for the assessment, a description of the proposed project, the existing landscape as well as landscape policy and relevant guidance.

This report has been prepared by Ms. Gwen Tierney; Landmark Designs Ltd. Ms. Tierney's relevant qualification is B.Ag.Sc. Land. Hort. Ms. Tierney has over 20 years' experience in the landscape design and master planning and implementation of a variety of projects.

1.2 Assessment Methodology

This report covers two distinct but related areas:

1. Landscape Impact Assessment (LIA) which relates to the assessment of effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right and is concerned with how the proposal will affect the physical elements that make up the landscape and its distinctive character.

2. Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) while relates to the assessment of effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people. This deals with how the surroundings of individuals, or groups of people, may be specifically affected by changes in the content and character of views as a result of the change or loss of existing elements of the landscape and/or introduction of new elements. Visual impacts may occur from Visual Obstruction (blocking of a view) or Visual Intrusion (interruption of a view without blocking).

1.2.1 Desktop Study

A site assessment was undertaken in September 2022. Desktop studies were undertaken to evaluate the existing site conditions such as topography, vegetation, settlement patterns, contiguous land use, drainage, landscape character as well as overall visibility of the site from surrounding areas. Information was also collated on protected views, scenic routes, special and protected landscapes etc. The following documents and web resources were consulted for the desktop study:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2013)
- EPA Advice Notes on Current Practice in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements (EPA, 2003).
- Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements' (Environmental Protection Agency 2002).
- EPA's draft Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, August 2017
- Draft Revised Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Statements, September 2015
- Draft Advice Notes for Preparing Environmental Impact Statements, September 2015
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment' published by DoHPLG in August 2018
- Advice Notes on Current Practice in the Preparation of Environmental Impact Statements (Environmental Protection Agency 2002).
- DoEHLG Landscape and Landscape Assessment Guidelines (June 2000).

1.2.2 Impact Significance Criteria

The impact significance and rating criteria used are those outlined in the EPA guidelines and have been modified to take account of other references used in the assessment methodology. This table is used as a guide. The assessor also uses professional judgement informed by their expertise, experience and common sense to arrive at a classification of significance.

The sensitivity of the landscape to change is the degree to which a particular Landscape Character Area (LCA) can accommodate change or new elements without unacceptable detrimental effects to its essential characteristics. Landscape Sensitivity is often referred to as 'value' and is classified using the following criteria:

Table 1.0 Sensitivity of Landscape

Sensitivity Level	Typical Criteria
High Sensitivity	Landscapes where the landscape character is highly susceptible to change and the landscape receptor has a low ability to accommodate change. e.g., users of an outdoor recreation feature which focuses on the landscape; valued views enjoyed by the community; tourist visitors to scenic viewpoint; occupiers of residential properties with a high level of visual amenity.
Medium Sensitivity	Landscapes where the overall landscape character has a moderate ability to accommodate the proposed development. e.g., users of an outdoor sport or recreation which does not offer or focus attention on landscape; occupiers of residential properties with a medium level of visual amenity.
Low Sensitivity	Landscapes where the overall landscape character has a strong ability to accommodate the proposed development e.g., regular commuters, people at place of work, likely to be travelling for other purposes than just the view; occupiers of residential properties with a low level of visual amenity.

1.2.3 Magnitude of Likely Landscape Impacts

The magnitude of a predicted landscape impact is a product of scale, extent or degree of change that is likely to be experienced as a result of the proposed project. The magnitude takes into account whether there is a direct physical impact resulting from the loss of landscape components and/or a change that extends beyond the boundary of the proposed project that may have an effect on the landscape character of the area.

Table 1.1 Magnitude of Landscape

Category	Criteria
High	Total loss or alteration to key elements/features/characteristics of the existing view and/or introduction of elements considered totally uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape or view.
Medium	Partial loss or alteration to the key elements/features/characteristics of the existing view and/or introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving view.
Low	Minor loss or alteration to the key elements/features/characteristics of the existing view and/or introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving view.
Negligible	Very minor loss or alteration to the key elements/features/characteristics of the existing view and/or introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving view.

1.2.4 Significance of Likely Landscape and Visual Impacts

The significance of the landscape impact will be the combination of the sensitivity of the landscape against the magnitude of change.

Table 1.2 Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

Magnitude of Visual Resource Change	Sensitivity		
	High	Medium	Low
High	Major	Moderate/Major	Moderate
Medium	Moderate/Major	Moderate	Moderate
Low	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
Negligible	Minor	Negligible	Negligible

The quality of impacts may be classified as positive, neutral or negative. Development has the potential to improve the environment as well as damage it. In certain situations, there might be policy encouraging a type of change in the landscape, and if a development achieves the objective of the policy the resulting effect might be positive, even if the landscape character is profoundly changed. This is not an absolute exercise; in particular visual receptors attitudes to development and therefore their response to the impact of a development will vary.

However, the methodology applied is designed to provide robust justification for the conclusions drawn.

Table 1.3 Significance of Impacts.

Quality of Impact	Description
Negative	A change which reduces the quality of the environment (for example, lessening species diversity or diminishing the reproductive capacity of an ecosystem; or damaging health or property or by causing nuisance).
Neutral	No effects or effects that are imperceptible, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error.
Positive	A change which improves the quality of the environment (for example, by increasing species diversity; or the improving reproductive capacity of an ecosystem, or by removing nuisances or improving amenities).

Impacts/effects are also categorised according to their longevity or timescale:

- **Brief:** lasting up to one day
- **Temporary:** lasting up to one year
- **Short-term:** lasting one to seven years
- **Medium-term:** lasting seven to fifteen years
- **Long-term:** lasting fifteen to sixty years
- **Permanent:** lasting over sixty years

Impacts are considered at both the construction and operation stage and further aspects including do-nothing, worse-case, cumulative, interactive, indirect and residual impacts are also considered, where appropriate, in the assessment.

1.2.5 Definition of Visual Impacts

The visual impact assessment measures the extent to which the proposed development can be seen from residences, work places, open space and designated viewpoints. Visual receptors are those people who can see the proposed development prior to mitigation.

Visual impact is described in terms of Visual Obstruction where the receptor's views are physically blocked by the proposals. Visual Intrusion is where the receptors views are affected by the proposed development and loss of vegetative screens due to construction.

1.3 Baseline Environment

1.3.1 Site Description and Context

The subject site comprises an area of 1.67 acres and is located along the north west of boundary of Crockaunadreenagh road (L6019) intersecting Redgap local road (L3605) 315m further north. The site access will be from the Crockaunadreenagh road on the south east boundary of the site.

The site is currently part of the applicants' 8 hectares of leased land from his parents, which is designated for a thoroughbred breeding establishment.

Vegetation along the roadside boundary comprises mature and maintained evergreen hedgerow at 2.5-4.0m tall consisting of Leyland Cypress species, located inside a low berm approximately 1m high. A grass swale extends along the length of the roadside boundary next the road edge.



Figure 1.0: View along Crockaunadreenagh road heading northeast.

In the context of the surrounding landscape, the subject slopes on a gradient of 1:10 or 10% from south east (+267.0m OD) to north west (+257.0m OD).

Vegetation within the subject site is limited to the south eastern roadside boundary as the existing site area comprises a number of paddocks.

Land use immediately adjacent the site comprises agriculture to the north west, north and north east which are within the applicants' family ownership and part of the equine breeding and training facilities. Rural residential is located to the east (family home), south east and south.

1.4 Landscape Policy Context

South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out the policies and objectives for the county. Chapters 3 and 4 contain specific landscape related zoning, policies and objectives. These include recreation and amenity land use zoning and associated objectives as well as objectives with regard to green infrastructure and landscape character. Other relevant planning policy for the subject site is contained in Chapter 12.

1.4.1 South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028

The South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out the policies and objectives in relation to proper planning and development of the county, including the area pertaining to the site and its surrounds.

The site in addition to the lands to the immediate northeast, north, northwest west to south west is zoned 'Objective RU – *To protect and improve rural amenity and to provide for the development of agriculture.* The lands to the east and south east of the site on the other side of the road are zoned 'Objective HA -DM – *to protect and enhance the outstanding natural character and amenity of the Dublin Mountain Areas*'.



Figure 1.1: Extract from South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028 identifying Zoning Objectives (Sheet 11a)

Relevant Development Plan Policies

Chapter 2

HOUSING (H) Policy H17 Rural Housing in RU Zone

It is the policy of the Council that within areas designated with Zoning Objective 'RU' (to protect and improve rural amenity and to provide for the development of agriculture) new or replacement dwellings will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

H17 Objective 2:

To consider new or replacement dwellings within areas designated with Zoning Objective "RU" (to protect and improve rural amenity and to provide for the development of agriculture) where: The applicant can establish a genuine need to reside in proximity to their employment (such employment being related to the rural community) OR The applicant has close family ties with the rural community.

Section 6.9.7 Rural House & Extension Design

Policy H23 Rural Housing and Extension Design

H23 Objective 1:

Ensure that all new rural housing and extensions within areas designated within Zoning Objectives Rural (RU), Dublin Mountain (HA-DM), Liffey Valley (HA-LV) and Dodder Valley (HA-DV);

- Is designed and sited to minimise impact on the landscape including views and prospects of natural beauty or interest or on the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest including natural and built heritage features; and
- Will not have a negative impact on the environment including flora, fauna, soil, water (including ground water) and human beings; and
- Is designed and sited to minimise impact on the site's natural contours and natural drainage features; and
- Retains and reinstates (where in exceptional circumstance retention cannot be achieved) traditional roadside and field boundaries; and
- Is designed and sited to circumvent the need for intrusive engineered solutions such as cut and filled platforms, embankments or retaining walls; and
- Would comply with the EPA's Code of Practice for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent less than 10) 2021 except where planning permission was granted prior to 7th June 2021 in which case the EPA's Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment Systems Serving Single Houses 2009 applies; and
- Would not create or exacerbate ribbon or haphazard forms of development.

Chapter 4

South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028, Chapter 4, Green Infrastructure sets out a number of objectives for the County's Green Infrastructure network. In general, the dominant policy is to promote and develop an integrated GI network that provides connection to the regional network and enhances biodiversity.

G12 Objective 2: 'to protect and enhance the biodiversity value and ecological function of the Green Infrastructure network.

G12 Objective 3: 'to repair habitat fragmentation and provide for regeneration of flora and fauna where weaknesses are identified in the network.

A key objective of green infrastructure planning is that all new development is to contribute to the protection and enhancement of existing green infrastructure and the delivery of new green infrastructure as appropriate.

Chapter 3

Natural Cultural and Built Heritage (HCL) Policy 7 Landscapes

It is the policy of the Council to preserve and enhance the character of the County's landscapes particularly areas that have been deemed to have a medium to high Landscape Value or medium to high Landscape Sensitivity and to ensure that landscape considerations are an important factor in the management of development.

NCBH14 Objective 1:

To protect and enhance the landscape character of the County by ensuring that development retains, protects and, where necessary, enhances the appearance and character of the landscape, taking full cognisance of the Landscape Character Assessment of South Dublin County (2015).

NCBH14 Objective 2:

To ensure that development is assessed against Landscape Character, Landscape Values and Landscape Sensitivity as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment for South Dublin County (2015) in accordance with Government guidance on Landscape Character Assessment and the National Landscape Strategy.

Section 3.4.4 Views and Prospects

Table 3.5: Prospects to be Preserved and Protected

Policy NCBH15 Views and Prospects - not applicable

Chapter 12

Table 12.16: Zoning Objective 'RU': 'To protect and improve rural amenity and to provide for the development of agriculture'

12.3.5 LANDSCAPE

High Amenity Areas and Sensitive Landscapes

Development proposals in high amenity zones and sensitive landscapes, including proposals that could potentially impact on designated views or prospects, shall require a Landscape Impact Assessment to assess the visual impact of the development (including any ancillary works) on the landscape and to outline mitigation measures to reduce the impact of the development. At the discretion of the Planning Authority, smaller scale works that would be unlikely to impact on the landscape, such as dwelling extensions, will not be subject to this requirement. Development that enhances existing degraded landscapes should be supported. Landscape design shall ensure that:

- Development is carefully sited, designed and of an appropriate scale,
- Existing site features such as specimen trees, stands of mature trees, hedgerows, rock outcrops and water features are properly identified and retained, as appropriate and new planting or other landscaping should be appropriate to the character of the area,
- Landscaping in new developments includes native Irish planting and pollinator friendly species; and
- Significant on-site natural features shall influence the layout of new development.

1.4.2 Views and Prospects

The South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028 identifies a number of Key Views and Prospects. There are no protected Views or Prospects adjacent or in close proximity to the subject lands.

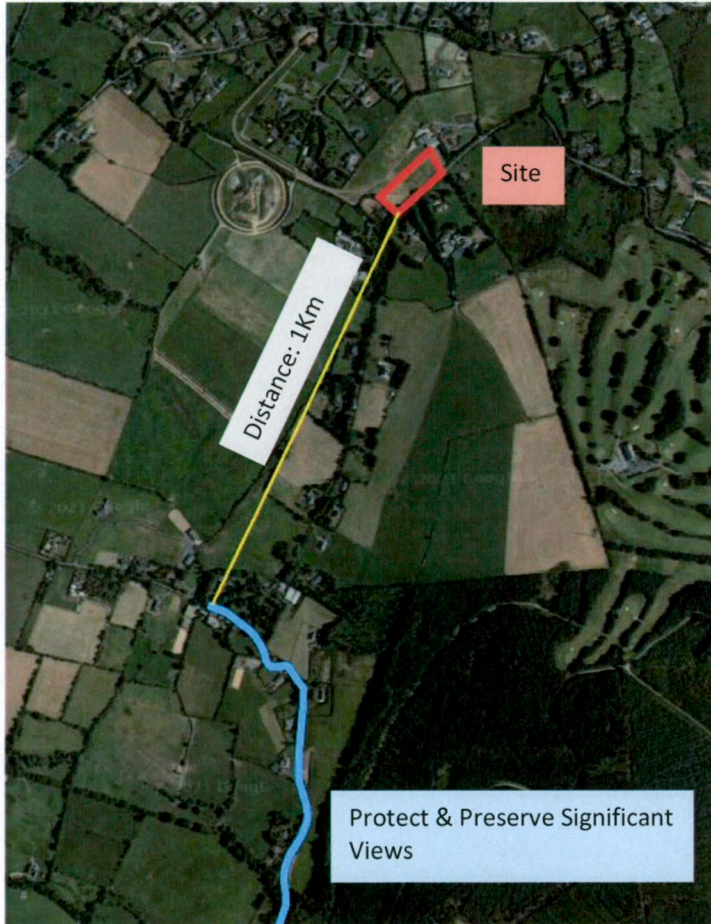


Figure 1.2: Protect & Preserve Significant Views in relation to Site Location

1.4.3 Protected Structures and Monuments

A number of recorded Monuments and Places and Protected Structures are identified in the South County Dublin Development Plan 2022-2028. There are no protected structures or recorded monuments to be preserved on the site subject lands.

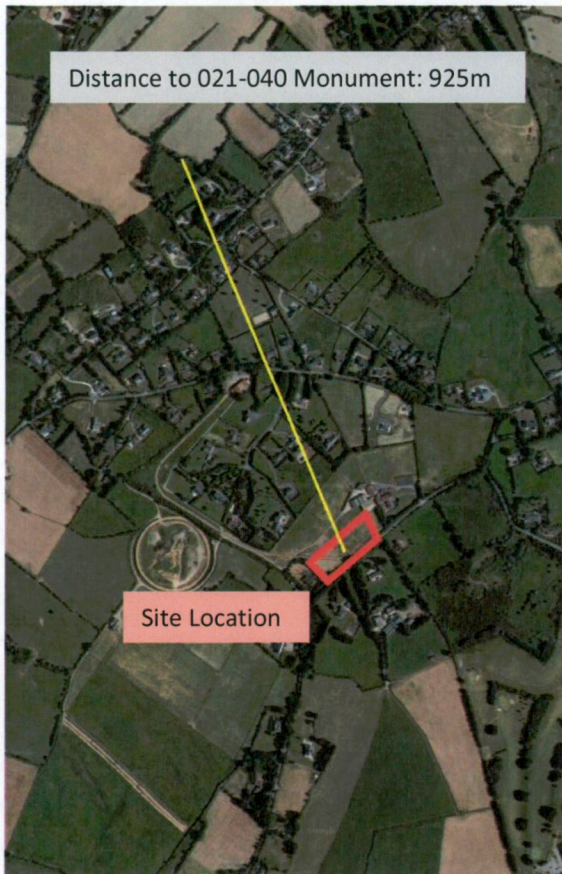


Figure 1.3: Structures, Monuments & Places in relation to Site Location

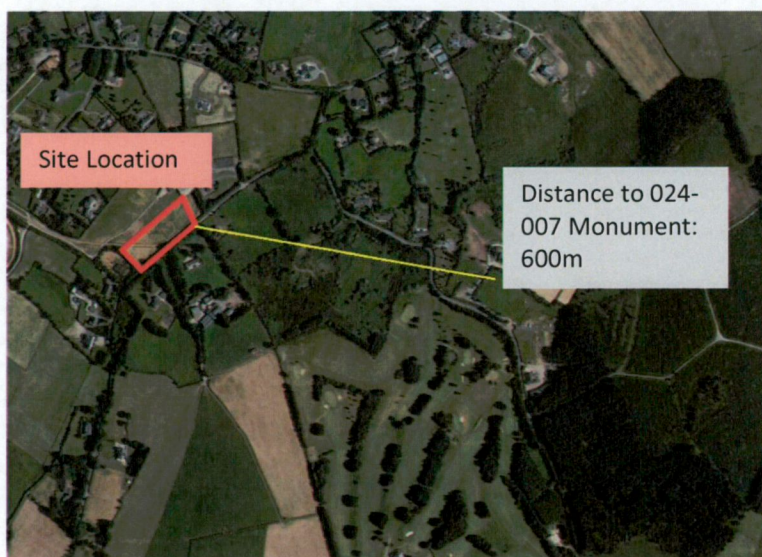


Figure 1.4: Structures, Monuments & Places in relation to Site Location



Figure 1.5: Structures, Monuments & Places in relation to Site Location

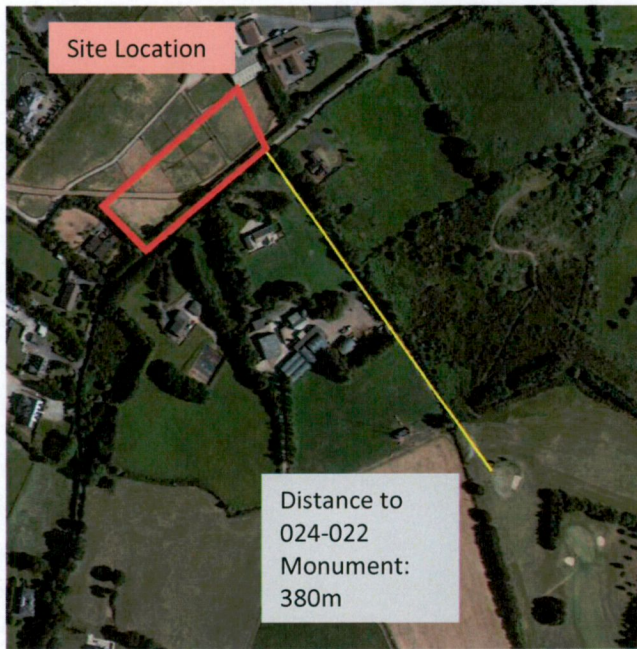


Figure 1.6: Structures, Monuments & Places in relation to Site Location

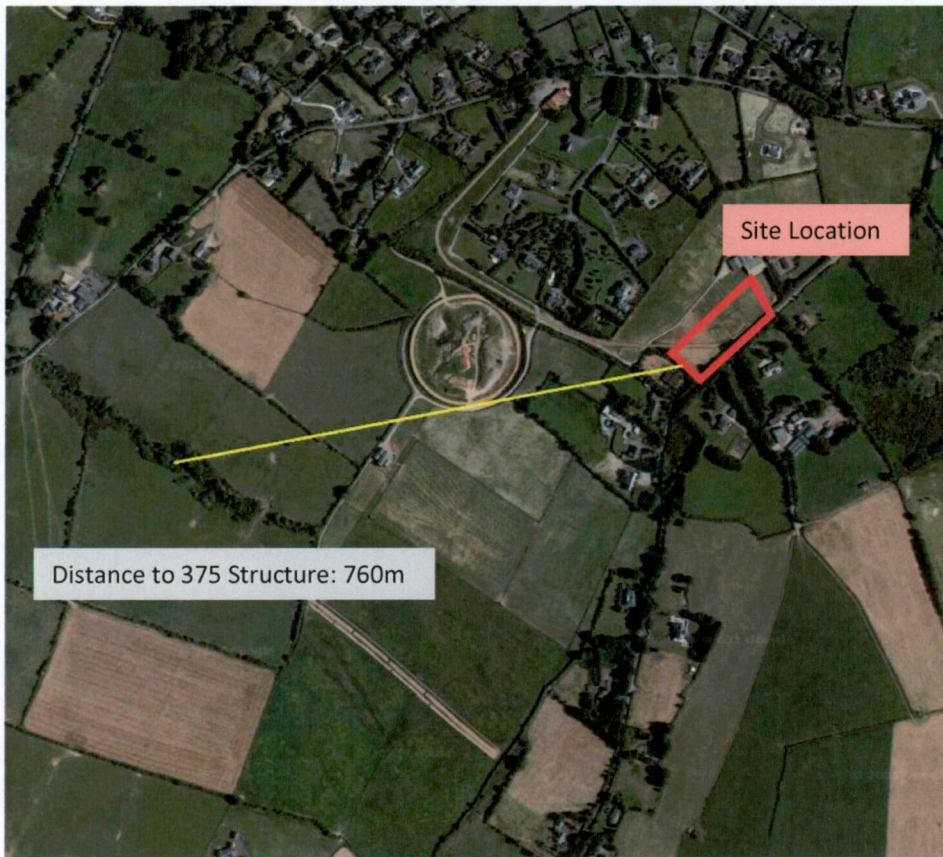


Figure 1.7: Structures, Monuments & Places in relation to Site Location

1.4.4 Natural Heritage Areas

A number of proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA's) are identified in the South County Dublin Development Plan 2022-2028.

With regard to the site of the proposed development the nearest pNHA Slade Valley and Crookslin Glen (000211) is located 2Km east of the site location and beyond Saggart and Lugg Hills and the Slade Road (L2005).

1.5 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

1.5.1 Site layout and access

The development comprises the construction of a single storey dwelling on a site of 1.67 acres.

The proposed dwelling house is single storey (233.6sqm) comprising a series of traditional forms, varying in height, developed to integrate with the existing local heritage. The traditional form and finish of the most northerly and southerly roofs are connected by a flat green roof which is discreet and modest in nature, allowing the traditional low pitched roofs to be the principal form. The house follows the gradient of the site with the finished floor level of the kitchen/living block set down 3.1m below road level. The different floor levels respond appropriately to the natural slope of the site, thus avoiding intrusive engineering works and minimizing impact on the site's natural contours and drainage.

The design and orientation of the dwelling maximizes passive solar gain. Renewable sources of energy and energy efficient control systems will be installed, which will result in low energy consumption. When completed the proposed dwelling house will have a Building Energy Rating of A2 or better.

A new rain water harvesting system and soakaway is proposed for surface water drainage, to be designed and constructed in accordance with BRE Digest 365. The harvesting tank will supply water to toilets and washing machines and will also be used for irrigation externally. The soakaway will allow stormwater to be released back into the environment in a slow manner.

A new private well is proposed for water supply.

The existing entrance to the southern corner will be removed and planted with native trees and hedgerows. A new access is proposed to the new dwelling and will be from the existing Crockaunadreenagh road serving the development at the south eastern portion of the site.

1.6 Landscape Character Impacts

1.6.1 Landscape Character

The site of the proposed development is located in the Landscape Character Area 3 – Athgoe and Saggart Hills.

The landscape character of the area within and around the subject site is characterised by small to large sized agricultural holdings, rural housing, two golf courses and coniferous forestry plantations.

The document 'Landscape Character Assessment of South Dublin County 2015' describes this LCA as follows:

This LCA is predominantly agricultural in character with quite distinctive areas of contrasting character; the foothills overlooking the Newcastle Lowlands includes former villages such as Rathcoole and Saggart, which have expanded considerably in recent decades.

Outside these towns, there is an increasingly rural character, though certain areas such as Redgap have seen considerable rural housing development activity.

The housing style in the Redgap area is mixed with a notable concentration of 1990s style bungalows and two storey houses present.

The field systems are generally medium to large geometric with a variety of field enclosures ranging from earth banks and hedgerows to post and rail fencing.

Condition is variable within this LCA. The area of strongest landscape character and integrity, which presents as a cohesive landscape, are the southern hills adjoining Counties Wicklow and Kildare and including Brittas and the surrounding area. This retains a very agricultural character with working farms and is generally well maintained. Field patterns are stronger and are smaller than elsewhere in the county; settlement is very dispersed within this part of the LCA.

On the northern part of this LCA, housing pressures have in some areas detracted from the landscape character with a variety of boundary treatments, housing styles and siting locations that do not reflect the former agricultural vernacular. This contrasts again with areas that have retained a more rural and intact character, for example around Stonyhill Road.

The hilltops are commonly covered with coniferous plantations some of which are open to walkers such as Saggart Hill; on the lower slopes there is an increase in housing some of which are unsympathetic to local landscape character and comprise a variety of non-vernacular imported styles that do not generally integrate well with the surrounding area and cumulatively detract from the landscape character.

The character around Rathcoole and Saggart is busy and active with noise from the N7 and flight paths a constant feature. The urban fringe and access roads into Rathcoole have a variety of landscape and boundary treatments.

As detailed in Landscape Character Assessment of South Dublin County 2015 this landscape has Negligible to Low Landscape Capacity which is further described as follows:

Negligible: Key characteristics of the landscape are highly vulnerable to development. Development would result in a significant change in landscape character and should be avoided if possible.

Low: Key characteristics of the landscape are vulnerable to change. There may be limited opportunity to accommodate development without changing landscape character. Great care would be needed in locating development.

As identified in this LCA, the landscape character is derived from agriculture combined with other rural land uses including coniferous plantations forming a strong backdrop to the urbanised areas of the county.

1.6.2 Impacts on Landscape Character

The subject lands directly affect the physical character of LCA 3 – Athgoe and Saggart Hills. The landscape sensitivity of this LCA is High in accordance with SDCC's assessment and therefore this landscape has Negligible to Low Landscape Capacity to absorb development. As recognised within this document, there may be limited opportunity to accommodate development without changing landscape character and in accordance with the Mitigation Measures are set out therein.

Construction Phase

The proposed dwelling is to be sited into the existing contours, stepped into and following the existing topography.

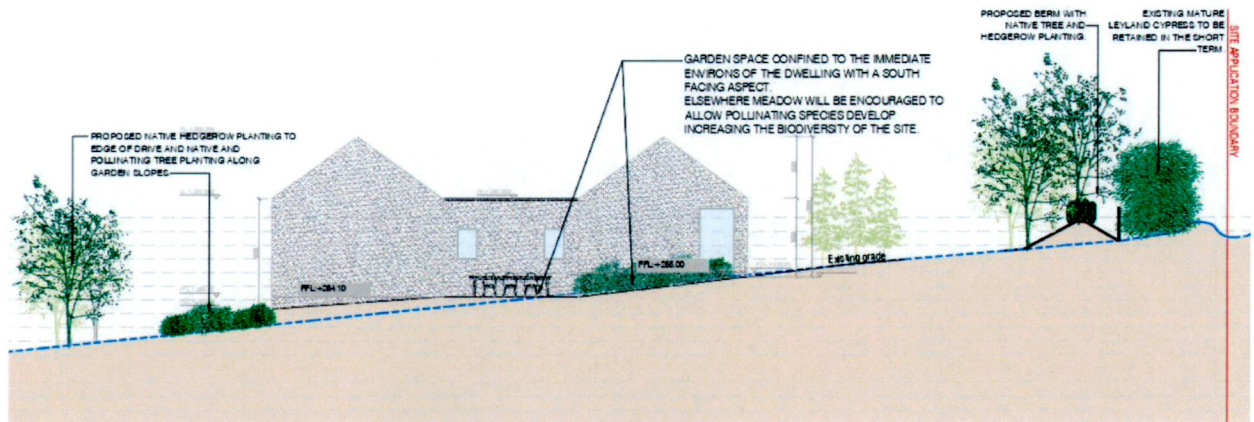


Figure 1.8: Section through existing grade and proposed dwelling.

The vernacular house style is developed to integrate with the existing but historic local building heritage, is sympathetic and integrates with the local landscape character. A green roof system is incorporated on the central roof of the building.

Construction of dwelling and associated WWTP, Site hoarding, construction traffic, ground disturbance will have a neutral, moderate and temporary impact.

Operational Phase

The proposed landscape works will be carried out within the first planting season following commencement of as site works. Once all landscape works are completed the landscape character will change from its existing character, however it will be in keeping with the local authority green infrastructure policies for this location and the effect can be considered positive, moderate and permanent.

1.6.3 Impacts on Existing Vegetation

Construction Phase

Notwithstanding the presence of a mature Leyland Cypress hedgerow along the roadside boundary, it is proposed to retain it in the short-term. A new mixed species native hedgerow will be planted along the roadside boundary inside the existing Leyland cypress hedge and all new boundaries are to be established with native tree and hedgerow planting creating a positive addition to the green infrastructure network.

The overall impact on existing vegetation is deemed to be positive, imperceptible and permanent.

Operational Phase

Following completion of the construction on the site, the main landscape effects of the proposed development are associated with its integration. Existing vegetation will continue to be protected until site works are finished and together with new planting will then continue to be maintained in accordance with best practice.

At 5 years following completion of all works, it is proposed to remove the existing Leyland cypress hedgerow along the road and plant with new mixed native species thereby creating a double hedgerow along the roadside boundary, eradicating all existing non-native species associated with this application.

There are no predicted impacts on the existing vegetation in the operational phase.

1.6.4 Impacts on Views

Construction Phase

The proposed development adheres to the mitigation measures set out for LCA3 which include the following:

- The house design reflects vernacular design principles.
- Landscape context and function have been considered – the location of the dwelling provides direct access to the applicants place of employment, i.e., farm that specialises in the breeding and training of both flat and national hunt race horses.
- Provision of new native boundary treatments with a management plan in place to remove existing non-native hedgerow in the short-term.
- Use of native hedgerows in the scheme to define new boundaries and additional native tree planting to provide screening and integration.

Site hoarding, construction traffic and ground disturbance will have a neutral, moderate and temporary impact.

Operational Phase

The proposed dwelling complements the scale, landform and pattern of the existing landscape character and maintains and improves landscape quality.

The introduction of new elements on the landscape at this location is deemed positive, moderate and permanent.

1.6.5 Summary Impacts of Proposed Development

The proposed development is located on lands zoned RU – (to protect and improve rural amenity and to provide for the development of agriculture) new or replacement dwellings will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

The layout and design of the proposed development at this location is consistent with the principles set out in the Development Plan 2022-2028:

- Landscape Character Assessment of South Dublin County 2015, LCA 3, Mitigation Measures,
- Chapter 12, Section 12.3.5 Landscape, High Amenity Areas and Sensitive Landscapes
- Chapter 6, H23 Objective 1
- Section 6.9.7 Rural House & Extension Design
- Policy H17 Rural Housing and Extension Design, H17 Objective 1.

Notwithstanding the land use zoning for the site location and wider area, it is considered that the development will have a positive, moderate effect on the existing character of the site. The landscape and visual change will be most pronounced during the mobilisation and construction stage, when activity is unfamiliar and when the existing character of the lands is altered slightly.

As a whole the completed development will make a moderate and positive contribution to the wider area and a positive contribution to the landscape character, green infrastructure network and biodiversity of the area.

1.7 Visual Impact Assessment

The potential visibility of the proposed development was established by determining the following:

- The extent of area in which the Proposed Development may be visible.
- The different groups of people (visual receptors) who may experience views of the proposed development.
- The viewpoints where visual receptors will be affected and the nature of the views at those points.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Viewer sensitivity is a combination of the sensitivity of the human receptor (i.e., resident, tourist, walker or worker) and the quality of the view experienced by the viewer.

Table 1.4 Sensitivity of Visual Receptor

Category	Typical Criteria
High Sensitivity	e.g., Users of an outdoor recreation feature which focuses on the landscape; valued views enjoyed by the community; tourist visitors to scenic viewpoint; occupiers of residential properties with a high level of visual amenity.
Medium Sensitivity	e.g., users of an outdoor sport or recreation which does not offer or focus attention on landscape; occupiers of residential properties with a medium level of visual amenity.
Low Sensitivity	e.g., regular commuters, people at place of work; occupiers of residential properties with a low level of visual amenity.

Magnitude of Visual Impact

The magnitude of a visual effect is determined on the basis of several factors; the relative number of viewers, distance from the viewpoint, the visual dominance of the proposed development within a view and its effect on the visual amenity as the following table indicates.

Table 1.5 Magnitude of Visual Impact

Category	Criteria
High	Total loss or alteration to key elements/features/characteristics of the existing view and/or introduction of elements considered totally uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape or view.
Medium	Partial loss or alteration to the key elements/features/characteristics of the existing view and/or introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving view.
Low	Minor loss or alteration to the key elements/features/characteristics of the existing view and/or introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving view.
No change	Very minor loss or alteration to the key elements/features/characteristics of the existing view and/or introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving view.

Magnitude can also be described as:

Neutral - Changes that are not discernible within the available vista and have no bearing on the visual amenity of the scene.

Positive – Changes that enhance the available vista by reducing visual clutter or restoring degraded features.

Visual Impact Significance

The Significance of the visual impact can only be defined on a project-by-project basis responding to the type of development proposed and its location. The principal criteria for determining significance are magnitude of visual resource change and viewer sensitivity.

Table 1.7 below illustrates the significance of visual impact as a correlation between user sensitivity and magnitude of visual resource change.

Table 1.6 Significance of Visual Impact

Magnitude of Visual Resource Change	Visual Sensitivity		
	Low	Medium	High
No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change
Low	Slight	Slight/Moderate	Moderate
Medium	Slight/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Substantial
High	Moderate	Moderate/Substantial	Substantial

1.7.1 Visual Analysis

Selection of Views

The selection of views takes into account the sensitivities and local authority designations of the site location. The views are chosen to represent the greatest visual impact from a variety of directions towards the site allowing sufficient distance to see the site of the proposed development within the landscape context. View from the public domain have been prioritised.

Visibility into the site

In the context of the proposed development visual receptors are considered to be High Sensitivity, i.e., valued views occupied by the community, occupiers of residential properties with a high-level visual amenity.

While the site is located in a landscape that is generally highly visible to many receptors, views into the site of the proposed development are restricted with no direct views into the site present.

A total of 6 viewpoints are selected which are representative views experienced from various receptors within the immediate vicinity of 1Km looking towards the site of the proposed development. The locations of these viewpoints are mapped on Figure 1.9. The selected views are from publicly accessible areas. The views have been recorded and annotated to show the extent of the proposed development within the photo-view and whether it is visible or not.

Views towards the proposed site and beyond 1Km were not considered to be impacted by the proposed development due to the nature and extent of the landscape in this area which results in views being more localised and obstructed by topography and roadside vegetation.

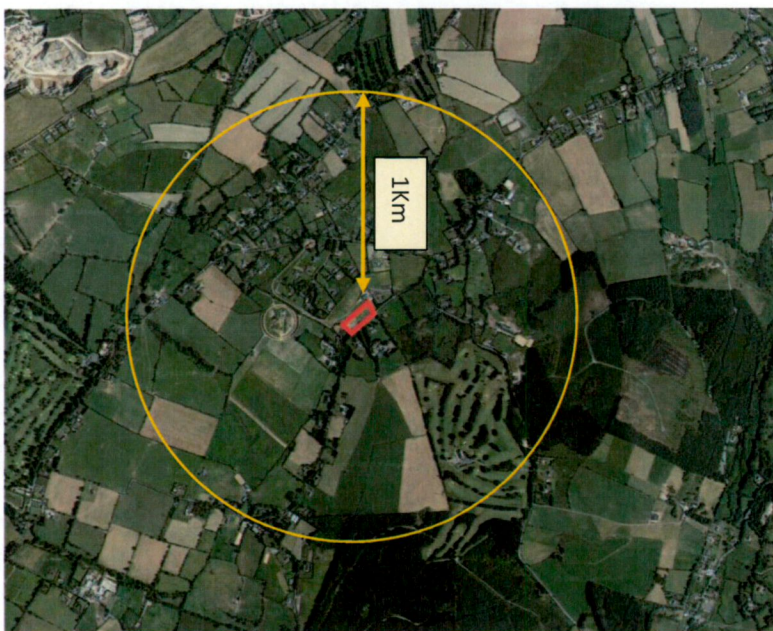


Figure 1.9: Extent of Viewpoint Assessment



Figure 1.10: Viewpoint locations

Views of the Site

Views of the subject site comprise a series of paddocks defined by timber post and rail fencing providing enclosures for horses.



Figure 1.11: Internal Viewpoint locations



Figure 1.12: Internal Viewpoint 1

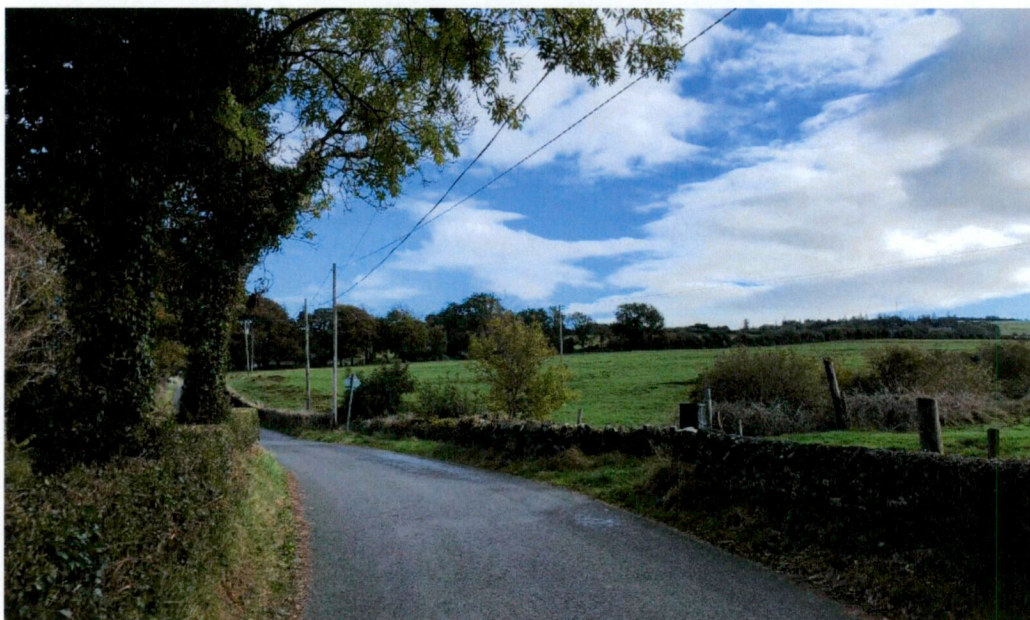


Figure 1.13: Internal Viewpoint 2

1.7.2 Viewpoint Assessments

A total of 6 viewpoints representing the main elements of the receiving environment and taking account of relevant policy have been selected for visual impact assessment.

Viewpoint 1



Description of existing view: The view from Rathcoole Hill Road (L6048) looking eastwards towards the site location. Mature roadside hedgerow vegetation left of view confines views to the road itself. Views open out to the right of view to adjacent fields and hedgerows.

Approximate Distance to site boundary: 980m

Effects of the Proposed Development on the Existing View: The intervening fields, topography and boundary vegetation screen views to the site of the proposed development which is located beyond the field trees and hedgerows.

The effect of the proposed development on the existing view will be negligible.

Sensitivity of Receptor: High Sensitivity.

Magnitude of Change: There will be little discernible difference in the view at this distance from the development and therefore the magnitude of change is considered No Change.

Significance of Effects: No Change.

Viewpoint 2



Description of existing view: The view is taken at Oweneen's Lane (L6044) looking north eastwards towards the site location and away from the road itself through a gap in the roadside vegetation. Mature roadside hedgerow vegetation confines views to the road itself. There are some gaps in the hedgerow where field access gates occur.

Approximate Distance to site boundary: 1000m

Effects of the Proposed Development on the Existing View: The intervening field and boundary vegetation screen views to the site of the proposed development which is located beyond the field trees and hedgerows on the horizon line.

The effect of the proposed development on the existing view will be negligible.

Sensitivity of Receptor: High Sensitivity.

Magnitude of Change: There will be little discernible difference in the view at this distance from the development and therefore the magnitude of change is considered No Change.

Significance of Effects: No Change.

Viewpoint 3



Description of existing view: The view is taken from Lee's Lane (L6031) looking north eastwards towards the site location. Mature roadside hedgerow vegetation confines views to the road itself.

Approximate Distance to site boundary: 450m

Effects of the Proposed Development on the Existing View: The intervening field and boundary vegetation screen views to the site of the proposed development which is located beyond roadside hedgerows.

The effect of the proposed development on the existing view will be negligible.

Sensitivity of Receptor: High Sensitivity.

Magnitude of Change: There will be no difference in the view at this distance from the development and therefore the magnitude of change is considered No Change.

Significance of Effects: No Change.

Viewpoint 4



Description of existing view: The view is taken from junction of Lynch Park Road (L6305) and Crockaunadreenagh Road (L6019) looking westwards. The site location is beyond the hedgerow to the right of the view, however the topography and mature roadside hedgerow vegetation confines views to the road itself.

Approximate Distance to site boundary: 265m

Effects of the Proposed Development on the Existing View: The intervening field and boundary vegetation screen views to the site of the proposed development which is located beyond the field trees and hedgerows.

The effect of the proposed development on the existing view will be negligible.

Sensitivity of Receptor: High Sensitivity.

Magnitude of Change: There will be no difference in the view at this distance from the development and therefore the magnitude of change is considered No Change.

Significance of Effects: No Change.

Viewpoint 5



Description of existing view: The view is taken from Redgap Road, (L6052) looking westwards. Topography differences between the road and adjoining lands confines views to the road itself.

Approximate Distance to site boundary: 290m

Effects of the Proposed Development on the Existing View: The intervening topography, field and boundary vegetation screen views to the site of the proposed development which is located beyond the field boundaries to the left of the view.

The effect of the proposed development on the existing view will be negligible.

Sensitivity of Receptor: High Sensitivity.

Magnitude of Change: There will be no difference in the view at this distance from the development and therefore the magnitude of change is considered No Change.

Significance of Effects: No Change.

Viewpoint 6



Description of existing view: The view is taken from Redgap Estate (L6051) cul de sac looking south eastwards towards the site location. Mature hedgerow vegetation confines views to the access road itself. There are some gaps in the hedgerow where access gates occur, however views are contained to the sites/gardens of the existing dwellings.

Approximate Distance to site boundary: 235m

Effects of the Proposed Development on the Existing View: The intervening topography, dwellings and garden boundary vegetation screen views to the site of the proposed development which is located beyond the dwellings and hedgerows.

The effect of the proposed development on the existing view will be negligible.

Sensitivity of Receptor: High Sensitivity.

Magnitude of Change: There will be no difference in the view at this distance from the development and therefore the magnitude of change is considered No Change.

Significance of Effects: No Change.

1.7.3 Visual Summary

The field visit identified the actual visibility of the proposed development. Potential views of the proposed development were found to be restricted due to the road network, existing topography and existing development.

The potential visual effects upon receptors considered from the 6 selected viewpoints is No Change to visual effects.

Although there are no direct views into the site, proposed landscape measures will be incorporated to visually integrate the proposed dwelling into the existing landscape.

The transient views of road users will be limited to glimpse through the proposed landscaping at the entrance to the dwelling.

The introduction of the new elements will be not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving view. Such views will be slightly modified but on a localised level.

Across much of the wider study zone, the proposed developments lack of visibility will result in the majority of receptors experiencing No Change to their existing views throughout the proposed developments life span.

1.8 Mitigation Measures

1.8.1 Landscape Plan

A Landscape Plan has been developed by Landmark Design and Consultancy Ltd for the proposed development.

The landscape measures have been developed in order to help, avoid, reduce and compensate for any predicted effects on both the landscape resource and visual amenity. The proposed landscape works will be implemented within the first available planting season following the commencement of construction works. Thereafter the planting will be maintained on an ongoing basis.

The landscape measures are three-fold:

- Retain all site perimeter boundary planting in order to retain the visual screening offered to the proposed development.
- Retain all soil on site as construction works commence and to be integrated into the landscape proposals.
- Additional boundary planting to mitigate landscape and visual impacts on surrounding areas.

The following mitigation measures are proposed to mitigate against any negative impacts and to reinforce the positive impacts of the proposed development.

Table 1.7 Mitigation Measures

Character of Potential Impact	Mitigation Measure
Construction Phase	
Existing Vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To protect hedgerows and trees to be retained in accordance with BS5837:2012; • Implement hedgerow/tree protection in accordance with BS5837:2012 before any demolition or construction works proceed; • Where required strip and store topsoil in accordance with BS4428:1989 and BS3882:2007; • Install proposed replacement and additional proposed planting and seeded areas in accordance with the Landscape Design.
Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site hoarding will be installed at the entrance to restrict views to the site during construction. • Maintain the character of the site by installing proposed planting in accordance with the Landscape Design.
Views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide substantial new tree planting, throughout the site to augment and enhance existing vegetation and establish new planting along all boundaries. • Maintain restricted views of the site by installing proposed planting in accordance with the proposed landscape plans;
Operational Phase	
Existing Vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and protect all vegetation in accordance with those identified in the proposed landscaping plan. • Install replacement planting for any plants that fail during the 24-month maintenance and defects liability period; • Provide replacement planting along the roadside boundary after 5 years and remove existing non-native hedgerow. • Site to be monitored regularly for signs of invasive species.
Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and manage proposed tree and hedgerow planting to ensure that it matures. • Site to be monitored regularly for signs of invasive species.
Views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain all existing retained and proposed vegetation to ensure that restricted views are retained into the site; • Maintain and manage proposed specimen tree planting to ensure that it matures.

1.9 Residual Impacts

1.9.1 Construction Phase

There will be no residual landscape or visual impact arising from the construction phase.

1.9.2 Residual Impacts following implementation of mitigation measures.

Residual impacts are the effects that the development is most likely to have on the receiving environment once the proposed mitigation measures are employed. It is anticipated that the proposed mitigation measures will substantially improve the landscape and visual quality of the proposed development over time, by increasing tree and vegetation cover enhancing the biodiversity of the site. The residual impacts are therefore considered to be positive, moderate and permanent.

1.9.3 Operational Phase

No significant residual landscape or visual impacts of any adverse nature will result from the proposed development. As with most developments, even initial perceptions of a negative nature abate with establishment, familiarity and time.

The residual impact will be neutral and imperceptible in the short term and imperceptible, and positive in the medium term.

1.10 References

The LVIA was undertaken utilising the following references:

- Draft Guidelines on Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements (EPA - Sept 2015)
- Draft Advise Notes for preparing Environmental Impact Statements (EPA - Sept 2015)
- Landscape Institute Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition) 2013
- South County Dublin Development Plan 2022-2028
- Landscape Character Assessment of South Dublin County 2015
- Connecting with Nature-Draft Biodiversity Action Plan 2020-2026
- Aerial photography
- OSi online historic mapping
- EPA Envision Map Viewer (www.epa.ie)